

Sown area of main crops, 1 June 2019

- Less arable land, more orchards
- More cereals and less industrial crops sown
- Productive area of wheat moderately grows both in Hungary and Europe
- Sown area of maize above 1 million hectares again
- Sown area of sunflower declines in Hungary and continues to increase in Europe
- More and more alfalfa
- Increase in procurement prices has favourable impact on production of certain vegetables
- More maize and less sunflower sown in the majority of counties

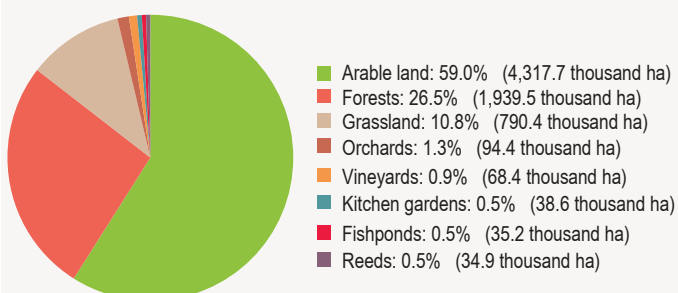
Less arable land, more orchards

Productive area, covering nearly 79% of Hungary's total area, was 7,319 thousand hectares on 1 June 2019, decreasing by some 36.5 thousand hectares compared to a year earlier. A significant part (5.3 million hectares) of the productive area is made up by agricultural area in a narrower sense, which is distributed among the land use categories of arable land, kitchen gardens, vineyards, orchards and grassland.

The decrease over a year was largely due to the withdrawal of areas from the land use category of arable land, though mainly areas in the land use category of kitchen gardens were reduced in proportional terms. Similarly to the trends in earlier years, holders used a 15% smaller area to produce own-consumed crops in 2019 compared to 2018. By contrast, more fruits are expected to be harvested, since there were new plantations on about 450 hectares, and more than three times that turned productive compared to last year.

Figure 1

Distribution of productive area by land use category, 1 June 2019



More cereals and less industrial crops sown

46% of the land area of the country was cultivated as arable land on 1 June 2019, similarly to earlier years. Out of the main groups of crops:

- Compared with a fall in earlier years, **cereals**, within which mostly maize (42%) and winter wheat (39%), are produced **on more than 2.5 million hectares again** – more than 60% of the utilised arable land area – in 2019. Although the weather in April was favourable for carrying out agricultural works, the lack of precipitation was a problem in the case of cereals sown in the spring, since spring barley was sown on an 11% (on 26,113 hectares) and spring wheat on a 20% smaller area (on 7,645 hectares) this year than in 2018. The area utilised for durum wheat production was down substantially as well: the growth of over 11 thousand hectares last year was followed by a fall of nearly 6 thousand hectares this year, durum wheat was sown on 38,926 hectares in total.
- **Dried pulses have been losing in significance** since 2015, their area in 2019 reached only 79% (17.5 thousand hectares) of the average of the last ten years. The area of field peas used for either animal or human food was reduced, by some thousand hectares in total.
- Out of root crops, **potatoes** covered 19.6 thousand hectares on average within arable land in the past ten years, however, their area **has been decreasing** in the last 5 years, they were sown on only 13.4 thousand hectares in 2019. The area of 14.3 thousand hectares utilised for **sugar beet** production was nearly **2 thousand hectares smaller** again than one year earlier and was 88% of the average of the last ten years.
- The sharp increase in the sown area of **industrial crops** stopped in 2017 as a result of a loss of the area of sunflower. In 2019 the area of soya was cut by 4.4% and that of rape by 11% compared to the preceding year. The sown area of **rape** was record high in 2018, exceeding the average of the preceding ten years by 43%. However, the dry autumn was not favourable for our fourth most important arable crop, which covered a **38 thousand hectares smaller** area (304,402 hectares) in 2019 than a year earlier.
- Despite the spread of alfalfa, the area of **forage plants** was slightly **reduced, by 3.4%** compared to 2018. Less maize for silage, green maize and red cover were sown, while the area of temporary grass was up by nearly 8.9 thousand hectares (by 14%).
- The **area of vegetables and strawberry** was **unchanged** compared to the previous year, however, holders chose instead of fresh peas, sweet corn, green beans, garlic and tomatoes larger proportions of other vegetables: onions were sown on 332, watermelon on 310 and carrots on 161 hectares larger areas. Two crops, sweet corn (34.7 thousand hectares) and fresh peas (20.6 thousand hectares) continued to make up a significant share (60%) of vegetables.
- Crops are grown **in greenhouses or under plastic cover** on some **2 thousand hectares**, the main crops covered are sweet pepper, tomatoes, cucumber, flowers and ornamental plants as well as strawberry.
- Areas let lie fallow grew more than 2.5-fold between 2014 and 2017, however, decreased in the last two years. 24.6 thousand hectares of areas let rest were re-utilised for crop production or withdrawn from arable farming by June 2019.

Table 1

Sown area of main groups of crops

Group of crops	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2019 as per cent of 2018
	hectares					
Cereals, total	2 734 517	2 595 466	2 426 336	2 413 521	2 522 919	104.5
Of which:						
winter wheat	992 139	992 641	908 327	969 612	979 990	101.1
maize	1 164 857	1 016 336	1 000 105	955 881	1 048 070	109.6
Industrial crops	967 460	1 005 727	1 130 298	1 081 962	985 641	91.1
Of which:						
sunflower	625 152	632 269	704 159	627 940	573 989	91.4
rape	225 564	259 868	306 721	342 824	304 402	88.8
soya	72 582	60 702	77 270	63 013	60 260	95.6
Forage plants	275 162	342 767	340 035	363 598	351 240	96.6
Vegetables and strawberry	78 283	91 848	90 359	92 030	92 739	100.8

Figure 2

Distribution of arable land area by group of crops

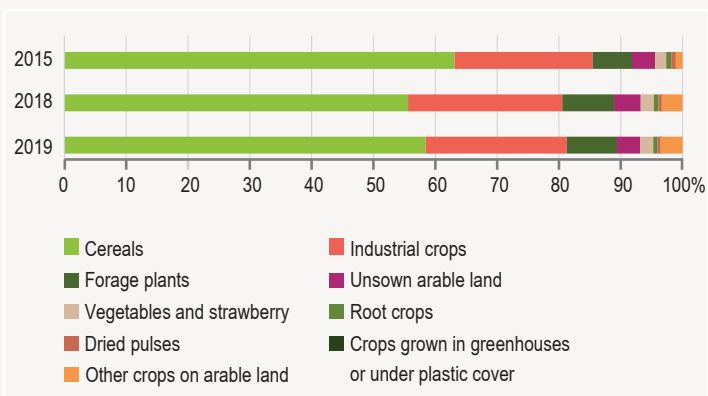
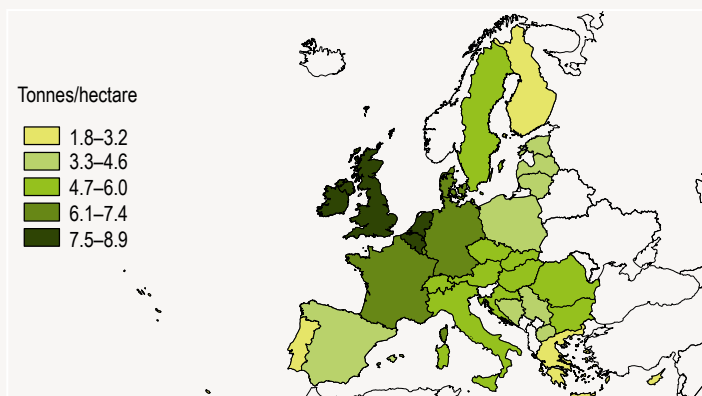


Figure 3

Average yield of winter wheat in Europe, 2018



Source: Eurostat.

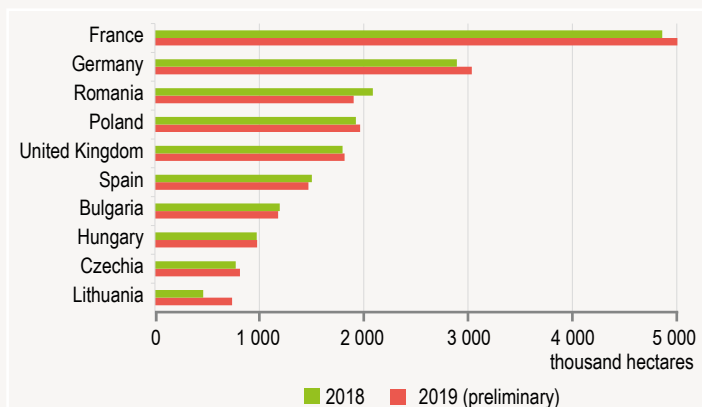
Productive area of wheat moderately grows both in Hungary and Europe

About a quarter of arable land areas are utilised for wheat production in Hungary, the crop was sown on no fewer than 1,037 thousand hectares in 2019. This value was similar to that in the preceding year, taking into consideration minor changes in the proportions of the different wheat species. The sown area of winter wheat, the most significant of these, was cut substantially in 2017, but the crop was increasingly widespread again in the past two years, and following a moderate increase its area approximated in 2019 again the average of the last ten years (96% of it).

The willingness to sow is encouraged by favourable weather and the increasing price of produce, however, the latter highly depends on quantity available on the market and on changes in stocks. 1 kilogram of wheat was taken over at a 12% higher price last year than one year earlier, against 49 forints in Hungary. All the same, however, the leading wheat-producing states in Europe, such as **France and Germany, went on increasing** their productive area. France, with a sown area of already 5 million hectares, harvested 35% more on average from a hectare in 2018 than Hungary did.

Figure 4

Productive area of winter wheat in main wheat-producing countries in Europe



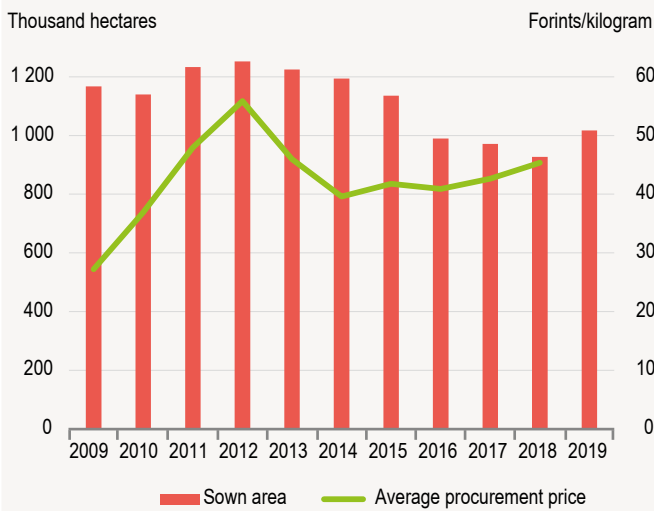
Source: Eurostat.

Sown area of maize above 1 million hectares again

As an effect of the rising prices and the expanding domestic processing capacities, the area of **maize** stopped decreasing, the crop covered a **92 thousand hectares larger** area on arable land in June 2019 than a year earlier. The area of grain maize used for sowing and of that for other purpose both were up significantly (by 6.4% and 9.7%, respectively), this year's total sown area of 1,048 thousand hectares reached 91% of the average of the last ten years.

Figure 5

Sown area and procurement price of maize*



* Excluding hybrid seed.

Sown area of sunflower declines in Hungary and continues to increase in Europe

The sown area of sunflower was up by more than a third in Hungary between 2010 and 2017. An increase in the global supply, which was simultaneous with the growth of the domestic supply, and Ukraine's huge volume of sunflower exports resulted in decreasing prices. A part of the major producers in Europe went on increasing their capacities, Romania, the main producer, cultivated a 17% larger area, which goes against a further increase in the product prices. Despite the rainy spring and the dry hot summer in 2018, the average yield of sunflower was favourable, nearly 3 tonnes per hectare **in Hungary**, in spite of which a – **some 54 thousand hectares – smaller** area was sown with it this year again.

Figure 6

Sown area and procurement price of sunflower

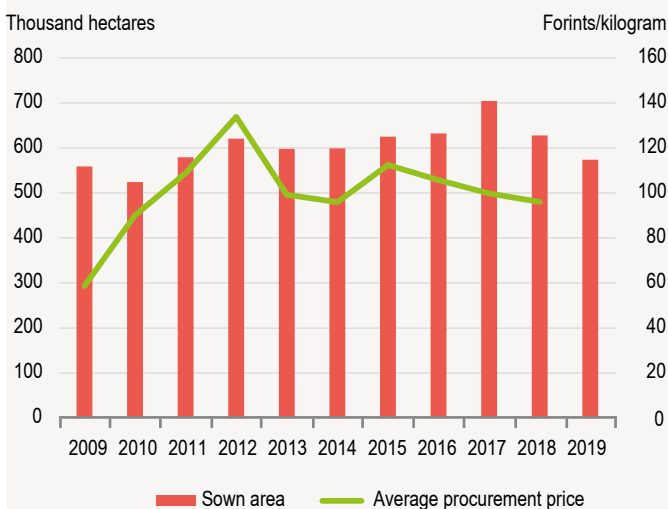
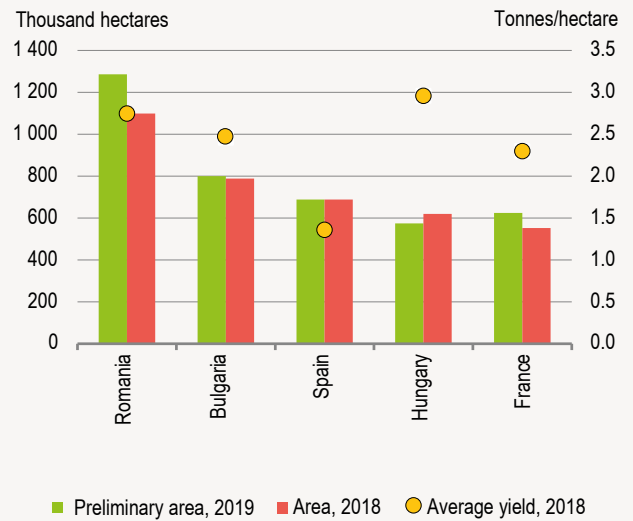


Figure 7

Area and average yield of sunflower in major sunflower-producing countries in Europe



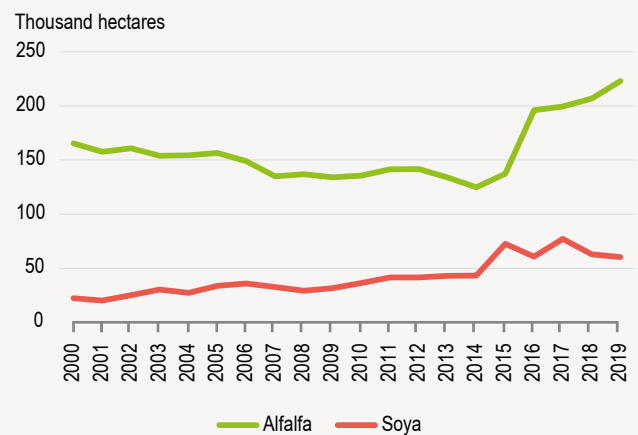
Source: Eurostat.

More and more alfalfa

The sown area of **alfalfa**, often applied in greening, too, has been growing since 2014, following moderate growths in the past two years it was **up by a further 7.9%** in 2019. Temporary grass also covered a substantial area (70,722 hectares), only somewhat more than a quarter as much land (20 thousand hectares) was used 5 years earlier for temporary grazing and mowing.

Figure 8

Sown area of alfalfa and soya

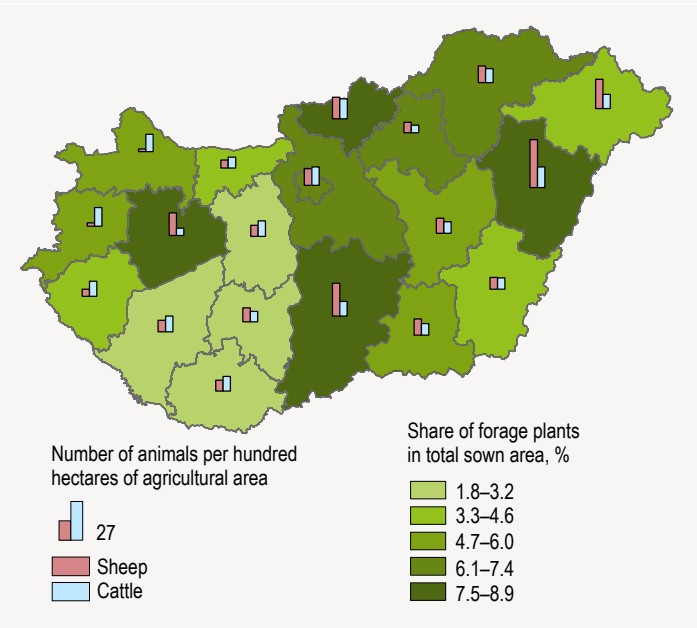


The ban introduced in 2018 on plant protection product use in greening partly resulted in the growth of the area of leguminous plants on areas formerly sown with soya. **Soya** was sown again on a – some 3 thousand hectares – smaller area (60,260 hectares), however, even this value was 18% higher than the average of the last 10 years.

The sowing of forage plants is mainly related to animal keeping, so it is most typical in Hajdú-Bihar and Bács-Kiskun Counties. Besides, significant quantities of hay and green fodder are harvested in Central Hungary as well, from a total of 31.5 thousand hectares (9.0% of the national area).

Figure 9

Share of forage plants in total sown area, and per-unit number of animals, 1 June 2019, by county*



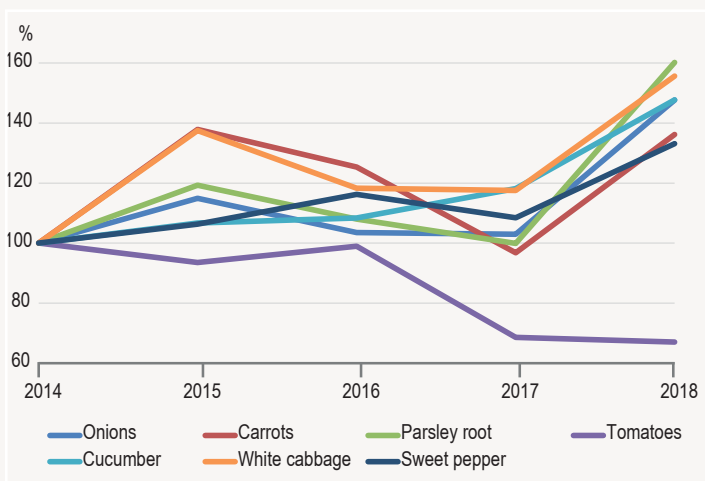
* Figures for Pest County and Budapest together.

Increase in procurement prices has favourable impact on production of certain vegetables

The procurement price of major vegetables, with the exception of tomatoes, went up significantly in 2018 compared to the preceding year. 60% more was paid to producers for a kilo of parsley root, while the price of tomatoes was cut by 2.2%.

Figure 10

Procurement price of vegetables (2014=100%)

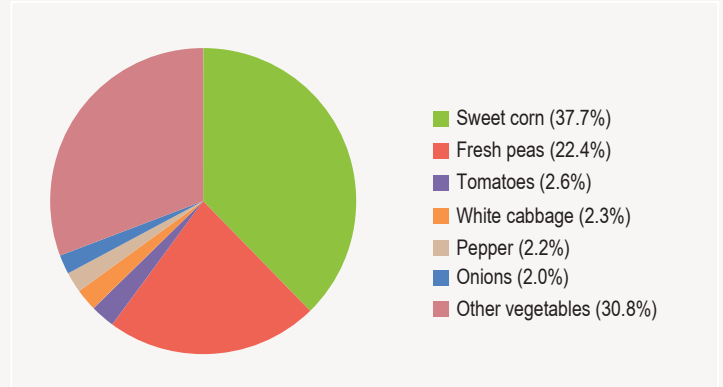


Substantial growths were measured in 2019 compared to one year earlier in the sown area of parsley root, parsley leaves, white cabbage, onions, carrots and sweet fennel.

Vegetables as a whole were sown on 91.9 thousand hectares, about the same area as last year, 38% of which – 34.7 thousand hectares, a somewhat smaller area than a year earlier – was utilised for sweet corn production. A 10% (2.2 thousand hectares) smaller area was sown with fresh peas, the decrease was about the same as the area of white cabbage.

Figure 11

Share of different vegetables in sown area of vegetables, 1 June 2019

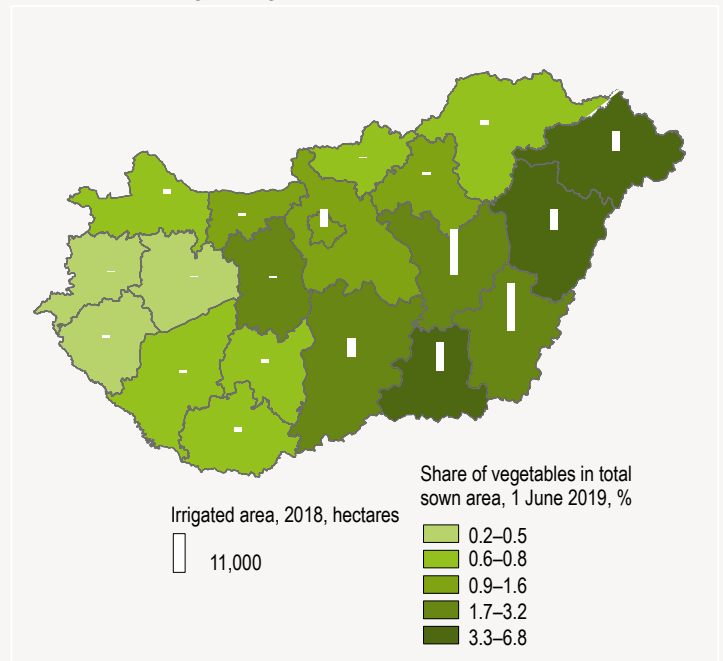


Nearly a quarter (23.5%) of the area of vegetables was in Hajdú-Bihar County, where the share of the group of crop in the total sown area was the highest (6.8%). Vegetable producers in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Csongrád and Bács-Kiskun Counties were farming nearly half as large areas, and horticultural crops were grown on 12.5 thousand hectares, 14% of the domestic sown area, in Békés County.

One of the primary conditions of enhancing yields and crop safety is irrigation, which is especially true for vegetable production. 21% and 22% of agricultural areas irrigated at least once lay in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Békés Counties, respectively, in addition, the proportion of irrigated agricultural areas in Csongrád County (4.4%) was two and a half times the national average in 2018.

Figure 12

Share of vegetables in total sown area, and areas irrigated at least once, by county*



* Figures for Pest County and Budapest together.

More maize and less sunflower sown in the majority of counties

The production of the four major crops on arable land is concentrated mostly in Northern Great Plain as well as Bács-Kiskun and Békés Counties.

- The sown area of **winter wheat** grew in some half of the counties, among which in Békés and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Counties, having the largest winter wheat areas.
- More **maize** was sown in all of Hungary's counties with a few exceptions, its area increasing mainly in Pest and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Counties.
- Compared with a significant national decrease, the area of **sunflower** was up by about 3.5 thousand hectares in Csongrád County and the crop continued to be widely grown in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Békés Counties.
- The area of **rape** fell mostly in two counties compared to one year earlier: to 54% in Békés County and to 39% in Csongrád County.

Figure 13

Area of main crops on arable land (in thousand hectares), and direction of its change compared to previous year, 1 June 2019



a) Including Budapest.

b) Excluding area sown with hybrid seed.

Further information,

data (links):

[Tables](#)

[Methodology](#)

Contact details:

kommunikacio@ksh.hu

[Contact us!](#)

Telephone: +36 (1) 345 6789

www.ksh.hu